

Singers and conductor will resolve to accomplish something tangible each rehearsal. It is not sufficient merely to sing for the stipulated amount of time, even though the singing is thoroughly enjoyed. At the beginning of each rehearsal the conductor and singers must look forward to attaining certain definite results during the rehearsal.

Efficiency requires orderliness and discipline in the conduct of the rehearsal. The conductor will plan exactly what is to be done during the hour. He will have outlined a series of points to be accomplished and he will decide approximately the number of minutes for each point. He will also decide the method to be used in presenting each of these points.

The thoroughness with which the conductor prepares for the rehearsal, the orderliness with which he conducts the rehearsal, and the eagerness with which the singers follow his directions will determine to a large extent the success of the chorus. Given two groups of equal ability and experience, with two conductors of similar skill, except that one gets thirty minutes of actual work from an hour rehearsal, and the other gets fully sixty minutes from a similar hour rehearsal, it is easy to see which group will progress more rapidly. Many a mediocre conductor has triumphed over a rival of greater musical training, through using common sense in planning an efficient use of time in rehearsal.

Members of the chorus have much to do with the success of their organization by insisting on complete attention to the conductor. Talking, whispering, joking, or laughing among the members should never be tolerated except as sanctioned by the conductor. The experienced conductor will know when to permit a few minutes for a hearty laugh. A slight period for relaxation of this kind may help the singers to return to the music with renewed energy.

THE ART OF
A CAPPELLA SINGING

THE ART OF A CAPPELLA SINGING

WITH SIXTEEN
REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Containing instruction for singers in choral groups, to
promote an artistic ensemble, and analysis of the compositions
for technique, interpretation, and appreciation

REVIEW COPY

By

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FOREWORD

This book will assist in solving the problems of the individual voice, choral technique, repertoire, and interpretation.

I. THE INDIVIDUAL VOICE

Attention is given to the general principles of singing applicable to all types of voices and to all singers. Stress is placed on the necessity for free and adequate breathing, the tone sustaining qualities of vowel sounds, the expressive function of distinctly enunciated consonants, and the problem of accurate intonation.

Particular attention is given to pronunciation. Vocal sounds are classified in relation to four basic vocal positions. This is the simplest and most practical classification when dealing with large groups. Teachers who prefer to use a more elaborate vowel classification and procedure, or wish to change the order in which the vowel sounds are introduced, will find that this book adapts itself readily to such plans. Phonetic spelling, bringing out the sound characteristics of each word, is printed with all the music.

II. CHORAL TECHNIQUE

There are suggestions for the rehearsal room, the method of organizing the rehearsal period, the preliminary breathing and vocal exercises, and the problems of choral singing. A few of the more prominent choral problems discussed are intonation, blend, pronunciation, scale passages, chord balance, accent, phrase shape, rhythmic variety, form, expression, and interpretation.

III. REPERTOIRE

Sixteen notable pieces are included. Each one has musical merit of a high order.

Some of these are well known, others are heard only occasionally and a few are entirely new in a usable form.

Several are extremely simple, a few are fairly difficult, and there are all gradations between these extremes.

There is great variety of type. Secular numbers are chosen from French, German, Italian and English sources and the texts are adapted to present-day standards. Sacred numbers are selected from the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant services. The list includes music for all occasions: sacred, secular, serious or gay.

All of the numbers can be sung without instrumental accompaniment although a piano reduction to two staves is printed.

The vocal range is practicable for the amateur choir. The tenor does not go above *F*, except in four pieces. In several pieces the bass does not go below *B \flat* and it never goes below *G*. The lower limit for the alto is *A* except in two cases, but in five pieces *C* is the lower limit. The highest note for the soprano is *G*.

IV. INTERPRETATION

Marks of tempo, dynamics, and phrasing are unusually complete. The printed suggestions are extensive. Phonetic spelling, as an aid to accurate pronunciation, is given throughout.

This set of sixteen pieces is an introduction to standard choral literature of various nationalities and schools, particularly representing that golden age of choral music, the two centuries 1550-1750.

E. H. Wilcox
John Smallman

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CHAPTER I

THE REHEARSAL HOUR

SUCCESSFUL rehearsals are based upon preparations which cover every detail of the rehearsal.

It is essential that the singers be alive physically and alert mentally. Every item which will assist toward this end must be considered.

Ventilation is an important factor in the rehearsal hour. Fresh air makes breathing easier, is conducive to sustaining the pitch, dissipates physical exhaustion, improves the spirit and is good for the health. This point must be considered particularly in small rooms where there is danger of drafts. Open the windows at their tops, or place screens in front of them if necessary to stop drafts. An attempt to sing in a room where the air is foul and stagnant will lead to flattening, poor tone quality, and dullness of spirit.

Lighting must be adequate. If the light is too bright, there is a glare which is tiring, and insufficient light is depressing. The right amount of indirect lighting will help to establish the proper mood for an enjoyable rehearsal. The light should be placed so that it shines on the music and on the conductor's face and hands.

Rehearsal rooms vary in acoustics. The ideal room for singing has enough resonance to give brilliance but without a confusing echo. In an oblong room, stand at one end and sing the length of the room. Each singer should be able to hear all the other voices in the chorus.

The general appearance of the room will affect the mental attitude of the chorus during the rehearsal. The room must be clean and its appearance must show attention to details. It is easier to sing in a beautiful room than in a barn. Nice surroundings stimulate nice responses. The conductor and the singers ought to feel a responsibility for the appearance of the rehearsal room so that it may be conducive to the spirit of song.

If there is a choice of hours, select the time at which the singers are apt to be fresh physically and mentally. The most will be accomplished when the singers are in the proper condition to expend maximum energy in the rehearsals. If the day is begun with song, it will improve the mental attitude throughout the day and thereby assist in all activities of the day.

A happy mental attitude is essential for good singing. Rehearsals are to be enjoyed. Little can be accomplished if rehearsals are drudgery. The right kind of singing leads to happiness, and a happy spirit makes singing easier.